

Message Text

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65-60

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DLOS-03 COA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 IO-10 /070 W

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R 121111Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7944

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY OSLO

EUCOM

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1248

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, TU, GR

SUBJECT: AEGEAN DISPUTES

1. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR WHETHER NORWEGIAN SURVEY VESSEL "LONGVA" WILL PROCEED WITH SEISMOGRAPHIC EXPLORATIONS IN AEGEAN FOR TURKISH PETROLEUM ORGANIZATION (TPAO). AFTER NEARLY WITHDRAWING FROM CONTRACT LAST WEEK, VESSEL MOVED FROM MERSIN TO AEGEAN PORT OF IZMIR, AND PRIMIN IRMAK TOLD SENATE FEBRUARY 7 THAT "LONGVA" WOULD CONDUCT SURVEYS FOR ONE MONTH IN AEGEAN. HOWEVER, NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD US FEBRUARY 11 THAT VESSEL'S MASTER AND OWNERS CONTINUE TO HAVE MISGIVINGS AND OPERATIONS HAVE NOT YET COMMENCED. (FEBRUARY 12 HURRIYET REPORTS "LONGVA'S" OWNERS HAVE DECIDED TO PAY INDEMNITY IF NECESSARY AND CANCEL CONTRACT.)

2. GUNALTAY SIBAY, MFA OFFICER IN CHARGE OF LOS MATTERS, TOLD US FEBRUARY 11 THAT PART OF VESSEL'S WORK WOULD BE IN WATERS WHERE OWNERSHIP OF CONTINENTAL SHELF IS IN DISPUTE.
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HOWEVER, HE SAID, GOT BELIEVES "LONGVA'S" WORK WOULD NOT

RPT NOT BE REGARDED AS PROVOCATIVE BY GREECE. TURKEY'S INTENTION TO GO AHEAD WITH SEISMOGRAPHIC SURVEY WAS MENTIONED DURING RECENT DISCUSSION WITH GREEK AMBASSADOR HERE WHO DID NOT RPT NOT REACT UNFAVORABLY, HE SAID.

3. SIBAY ADDED THAT "LONGVA'S" CONTRACT COMMITS VESSEL TO OPERATE WHEREVER DIRECTED BY TURKISH PETROLEUM ORGANIZATION (TPAO); IT CONTAINS NO PROHIBITION AGAINST WORKING IN DISPUTED WATERS, BUT THE VESSEL'S MASTER OR OWNERS COULD ALWAYS BACK OUT ON PAYMENT OF AN INDEMNITY. HE ASSERTED THAT GREECE HAD PRESSURED NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT AND "LONGVA'S" OWNERS AGAINST GOING AHEAD WITH EXPLORATION, AND HE OBSERVED THAT THIS PRESSURE HAD BEEN UNWISE, BECAUSE TURKEY'S ONLY ALTERNATIVE IF LONGVA DROPPED OUT WOULD BE TO SEND NAVAL VESSEL WITH ESCORT. HE NOTED THAT GOT MUST KEEP IN MIND TURKISH PRESS' CONTINUING INTEREST IN AEGEAN SURVEY EFFORTS. AT ALL EVENTS, SIBAY BELIEVED DISPUTE OVER AEGEAN ISSUES PRESENTED MORE ENCOURAGING PROSPECTS IN WAKE OF TURKISH-GREEK EXCHANGE OF NOTES. TURKEY WAS DETERMINED TO EXPLORE EVERY POSSIBILITY FOR SETTLEMENT, HE DECLARED, AND HOPED TO SEE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF GOG'S GOOD INTENTIONS.

4. ON FEBRUARY 12 ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR ASKED SOYLEMEZ, MFA'S DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ABOUT HURRIYET STORY (PARA 1 ABOVE). SOYLEMEZ SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT OUTCOME OF MATTER WOULD BE. HE SAID VESSEL'S OWNERS HAD BEEN UNDER INTENSIVE PRESSURE FROM GOVERNMENT OF GREECE AND AHD INFORMED TURKISH AUTHORITIES THA THEY FELT RISKS WERE TOO GREAT FOR VESSEL TO PROCEED. SOYLEMEZ SAID GREEKS HAD INDICATED THEY WOULD "SINK THE VESSEL". (E/COM COUNSELOR ASKED IN WHAT FORM THIS THREAT HAD BEEN CONVEYED. SOYLEMEZ IN RESPONSE SAID THAT GOG HAD MADE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR TO SHIP'S OWNERS.) IN GOT VIEW, AS VESSEL WOULD BE OPERATING ON HIGH SEAS AND ONLY CARRYINT OUT SCIENTIFIC, I.E., SEISMIC EXPLORATION, ANY SUCH THREAT WAS COMPLETELY UNJUSTIFIED. SOYLEMEZ SAID ACTION AGAINST THE VESSEL IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD AMOUNT TO "PIRACY". WITH SOME BITTERNESS HE ADDED THAT SUCH ATTITUDE BY GOG AT THIS TIME IS QUITE UNREASONABLE, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF TURKISH POSITIVE RESPONSE

TO GREEK PROPOSAL FOR BRINGING AEGEAN ISSUE BEFORE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

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